

IOWA BIRD LIFE

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IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

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The Iowa Ornithologists' Union was organized at Ames, Iowa, February 28, 1923, for the study and protection of native birds and to promote fraternal relations among Iowa bird students.

The central design of the Union's official seal is the Eastern Goldfinch, designated State Bird of Iowa in 1933.

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WINTHROP, IOWA



THE OFFICERS FOR 1936

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OUR FOURTEENTH ANNUAL MEETING

By KATE E. LA MAR

Sec'y-Treasurer, Iowa Ornithologists' Union

The fourteenth annual meeting of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union was held on May 8 and 9, 1936, at Fairfield, Iowa, with Pres. G. O. Hendrickson presiding. The morning and afternoon sessions of May 8 were held in the Christian Church. The program was opened with an address of welcome by Mayor Paul S. Junkin of Fairfield.

The first speaker on the program was Miss Olivia McCabe, whose talk on "Waste Land for Birds in the Hand" called attention to places which, while seeming too inconsequential to most people for preservation, may have food and cover for birds.

Three papers on bird-banding were given. Mrs. Janet DuMont read "Experiences in Banding Waterfowl," a paper written by her son, Philip A. DuMont. Wesley Bartlett read a report by Malcolm McDonald, on the bird-banding activities of the Fairfield station. In "Bird-banding Experiences," Myrle L. Jones, of Pomeroy told of his traps, bait, and kinds of birds banded, and illustrated his talk with charts of his work.

Walter Rosene, Jr., talked on "Mourning Doves in Iowa." He is making a study of this species at Iowa State College, and he spoke of the bird's food, temperature, light factors and their effect, and other matters. Dr. Paul Errington spoke on "Winter Survival of Birds Around Ames." He mentioned the severity of the winter of 1935-36 and said that due to extreme cold weather and snow, birds were unable to get a proper diet.

A luncheon was served by the women of the Christian Church, after which the afternoon program was begun. Logan J. Bennett, of the U. S. Biological Survey, in speaking on "The Waterfowl Situation," said that many lakes contain more water than usual, which fact would be encouraging for an increase of waterfowl. He spoke of the studies of ducks now being conducted, and of the hopes of Ira N. Gabrielson, Chief of the Survey. Walter W. Bennett, also of the Biological Survey, was called upon for a brief account of his work.

"Observations at Home and in the Field," by Judge O. S. Thomas of Rock Rapids, was a very interesting talk in which he told of feeding winter birds and of various unusual species that he has found in northwest Iowa during recent years.

"The Last Chicken Hunt," by Walter Rosene, Sr., described very entertainingly the local hunt of Prairie Chickens near Boone, Iowa, on August 13, 1872. This paper is to be published in 'Nature Magazine'.

"What Promotes Bird Study" was the title of a talk by Arthur Palas. He urged the organizing of bird clubs, and said that schools, newspapers and local organizations need enthusiastic leaders 365 days of the year.

"Odds and Ends," by Miss Kate Glover, Keota, described her care of crippled birds and mentioned her studies that have continued over a period of more than 35 years.

Several papers were read by title in the absence of the authors. These were: "Some Studies in Bird Behavior," by Mrs. Toni Wendelburg; "Planning Board Activities with Birds," by Lloyd Smith; "Birds of Northeast Iowa," by O. P. Allert.

President Hendrickson called upon several persons for brief talks, among them Dr. F. L. R. Roberts, who urged members to work with farmers to save the hawks, Thomas G. Scott of Iowa State College, and Sylvan T. Runkel of the Forestry Dept. of Iowa State College.

The afternoon program was followed by the business meeting. The usual routine matters were taken care of. Pierce and Jones of the Auditing Committee reported that they had found the Secretary-

Treasurer's books to be correct. Miss LaMar read her report of the treasury for 1935-36; the report was accepted as read. The minutes of the last meeting were read and approved. The list of new officers as elected at the meeting is given on the title page of this issue. Mr. Rosene asked that new check-lists be printed for the Union. This matter was gone into at some length and was turned over to President Jones for handling. Editor Pierce spoke of his work on 'Iowa Bird Life,' and Mr. Dole commended him on the work he did in compiling the five-year index to the magazine. A motion was made that a committee be appointed to urge local bird clubs to affiliate with the Union. A card of greeting signed by the members present was prepared for Miss Althea Sherman, National, Iowa. An invitation from the Cedar Falls Nature Club, for the Union to hold its 1937 meeting in that city, was accepted. Mr. Dole read a telegram from the Davenport Chamber of Commerce, this also an invitation, to meet in Davenport next year.

The evening banquet and program, held in the Presbyterian Church, at which we were guests of the Fairfield Rotary Club, was easily the biggest event of the meeting. There were 246 persons present at the banquet. After Mayor Junkin introduced the guests, an entertainment of music, a playlet, and fun in various forms followed. Mrs. Margo K. Frankel talked on "Practical Conservation." She urged the people to: Arouse interest among farmers, create conservation courses in colleges, and collect accurate information regarding bird life in Iowa. Mrs. W. G. MacMartin showed four reels of very interesting colored motion pictures, which included scenes in Iowa state parks, the birds about her home in Tama, and Myrle Jones' banding station at Pomeroy. These "Glimpes from a Kodachrome Nature Library" ended the day's program.

On Saturday morning, May 9, the annual field trip was held. Several different parties were formed. One party which visited the Mississippi River at Burlington left at 3 A. M. Others visited Lacey-Keosauqua State Park and regions about Fairfield. The "Browse" was held in Old Settlers Park, Fairfield, at 12:30 P. M. After a delicious steak lunch was served, the list of birds was compiled. This concluded one of our fine conventions.

Resolutions.—BE IT RESOLVED by the Iowa Ornithologists' Union in its annual meeting assembled—

That we endorse the research work done by the U. S. Biological Survey through Iowa State College, and pledge our support to the men who are engaged in this work in Iowa.

That we pledge our support to the Iowa Conservation Commission in all its work for the conservation of natural resources and wildlife in Iowa.

That we express our appreciation to the Fairfield Bird Club, the Fairfield Rotarians and the city of Fairfield for their hospitality and fine entertainment.

During the past year our group was saddened by the death of E. D. Nauman of Sigourney. Mr. Nauman had given a lifetime to the study of nature, and especially birds. The many articles that came from his pen on his observations are examples of scientific accuracy, containing human appeal and interest. His death is felt as a keen loss to students of nature. We recommend that a copy of this resolution be sent to his family.

We have learned with deep regret of the death of Miss Kitty Tiedemann of Burlington, who was for many years a valuable member of the Union. Her loss is not alone to this Association but to the people of southeastern Iowa, where her bird studies were chiefly made. The Secretary is instructed to send to her family a copy of this resolution.

(Signed) O. S. Thomas
Arthur J. Palas
W. M. Rosene

Attendance Register.—AMES, Dr. and Mrs. Paul Errington, W. E. Green, Dr. and Mrs. G. O. Hendrickson, S. E. Runkel, Thos. G. Scott; ATLANTIC, Mrs. Billy Williams; BAXTER, Rev. and Mrs. D. E. Bosma; BURLINGTON, Mrs. E. W. Hanson, Mrs. Arnold Zurawski; CEDAR FALLS, Miss Winifred Gilbert, Miss Dorothy Thompson; CEDAR RAPIDS, Miss C. Esther Copp, Miss Lillian Serbousek; DES MOINES, Mr. and Mrs. W. G. DuMont, Mrs. Margo K. Frankel, Miss Kate LaMar, Miss Olivia McCabe, Thos. R. Selby; DUBUQUE, E. A. Hemsley, Mrs. R. W. Johnson, Miss Margaret Kohlman, Miss Elda Walters, Miss Mary Young; FAIRFIELD, Mrs. W. H. Bangs, W. H. Bartlett, Mrs. E. C. Bock, Chas. Carter, K. S. Clark, Dr. and Mrs. J. Fred Clarke, Mrs. I. N. Crow, J. Wilbur Dole, J. S. Dolley, Mrs. H. L. Easton, Miss Joyce Gatchel, Chas. Gilly, Miss Ila Glatfelty, Mrs. Marie Grauel, Miss Vinnie Johnson, Paul S. Junkin, Mrs. A. E. Labagh, R. W. Lamson, Mrs. E. C. Leber, R. B. Loudon, Miss Roberta Loudon, Mrs. C. T. McKenzie, Mrs. R. H. Munro, Mr. and Mrs. W. G. Pence, Mrs. Emma Roth, Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Stever, Mrs. H. M. Truesdale, Mr. and Mrs. Don Vernon, Ruth Walker, Miss Grace Whalen, Estella and S. P. Williamson, Miss Flora Wilson, Mr. and Mrs. R. F. Wilson; KEOTA, Kate B. Glover; LINEVILLE, Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Beed; MT. PLEASANT, L. Gouldmarse; OGDEN, Walter Rosene, Walter Rosene, Jr.; PIERSON, W. R. Mills; POMEROY, M. L. Jones; POSTVILLE, Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Palas; ROCK RAPIDS, Mr. and Mrs. O. S. Thomas; SIOUX CITY, Mrs. Mary L. Bailey; TAMA, Mrs. J. G. Ennes, Mrs. W. G. MacMartin, Mrs. H. F. Storm, Mrs. C. J. Wonser; VALLEY JUNCTION, Mr. and Mrs. W. A. Kinnaird; WASHINGTON, Mrs. C. S. Ragan, Mrs. Carlton Wilson, Irene Yard; WINTHROP, F. J. Pierce; LINCOLN, NEBR., Dr. and Mrs. F. L. R. Roberts; U. S. BIOL. SURVEY, Logan J. Bennett, Walter W. Bennett, Chas. Gilham. (The banquet register is not included.)

Birds Seen on the Field Trip.—Fairfield and vicinity, Lacey-Keosauqua State Park, Mississippi River near Burlington; May 9, about 5 A. M. to 12 M.

Pied-billed Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue and Green Herons, Am. Bittern, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Turkey Vulture, Marsh and Sparrow Hawks, Bob-white, Ring-necked Pheasant, King and Sora Rails, Am. Coot, Killdeer, Wilson's Snipe, Semipalmated and Upland Plovers, Spotted, Solitary, Pectoral, Baird's Least and Semipalmated Sandpipers, Lesser Yellow-legs, Dowitcher, Herring and Franklin's Gulls, Forster's and Black Terns, Mourning Dove, Yellow and Black-billed Cuckoos, Great Horned and Barred Owls, Whip-poor-will, Nighthawk, Chimney Swift, Belted Kingfisher, Flicker, Red-bellied, Red-headed, Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers, Eastern and Ark. Kingbirds, Crested and Least Flycatchers, Phoebe, Wood Pewee, Prairie Horned Lark, Tree, Bank, Rough-winged, Barn and Cliff Swallows, Purple Martin, Blue Jay, Crow, Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, House and Prairie Marsh Wrens, Mockingbird, Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Robin, Wood, Olive-backed, Gray-cheeked and Willow Thrushes, Bluebird, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Migrant Shrike, Starling, Bell's, Yellow-throated, Blue-headed, Red-eye and Warbling Vireos, Golden-winged, Blue-winged, Tenn., Nashville, Parula, Yellow, Magnolia, Black-throated Blue, Myrtle, Black-throated Green, Blackburnian, Chestnut-sided, Bay-breasted, Black-poll, Kentucky, Mourning, Wilson's and Canada Warblers, Ovenbird, Grinnell's and Louisiana Water-thrushes, Northern Yellow-throat, Yellow-breasted Chat, Redstart, English Sparrow, Bobolink, Eastern and Western Meadowlarks, Red-winged and Rusty Blackbirds, Orchard and Baltimore Orioles, Bronzed Grackle, Cowbird, Scarlet Tanager, Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel, Goldfinch, Towhee, Slate-colored Junco, Savannah, Grasshopper, Vesper, Lark, Chipping, Clay-colored, Field, White-crowned, White-throated, Swamp and Song Sparrows. Total, 156 species.

THE PASSENGER PIGEON IN NORTHEASTERN IOWA

By ELLISON ORR

Waukon, Iowa



We sometimes wonder what it was that destroyed the great dinosaurs and other hulking saurians of the Reptilian Age or how the Mammoth and Mastodon of the Pleistocene came to be exterminated. We shall never know certainly the specific cause, yet speaking generally, the answer is easy. Anything that changes materially the environment of any living species, unless the species has great adaptability, will work its destruction. Notwithstanding the fact that the buffalo furnished the greater part of the food and clothing supply of the American Indian of the Great Plains, it increased to numbers almost beyond belief. But

when the white man came with his gun, in a few years it was almost exterminated. A change of the conditions under which it flourished was the cause. What can we say of the Passenger Pigeon of which there now remains not a single living bird?

In *Ectopistes Migratorius* the flocking instinct was exceptionally strong. Vast flocks, great armies of this bird in numbers beyond comprehension, visited all parts of the continent from the Great Plains to the Atlantic and from the Gulf to the Great Lakes and north. Besides the larger flocks which appeared in various parts of the country at intervals, it was present in smaller, scattering flocks over the entire area.

Arkansas was a favorite wintering place of the Passenger Pigeon because of the abundant supply of "mast" which its forests afforded. In summer the immense horde of birds went wherever there was a plentiful supply of this mast, which consisted principally of acorns, and in the valley of the Ohio River of beechnuts. If they did not find it at one place, or if they had eaten the supply, they went elsewhere. To a bird that could fly 100 miles in an hour, distance meant nothing.

In early summer, where the great flocks found conditions right, they nested—often in Kentucky, Virginia, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin or Indiana, and once at least on the Yellow River in Iowa.

This Iowa nesting area was twenty miles long and two miles wide and reached from Moneek in Winneshiek County, through Allamakee County to the Mississippi River. In this area nearly every tree in which a place for a nest could be found was used. The larger trees would contain a dozen nests, and some of them two dozen or more.

I was very young the year the Passenger Pigeons nested on Yellow River in Allamakee County, and I remember only one incident in connection with that nesting. We had a timber lot in the "woods," a part of the nesting area, and at some time that summer my father went there for a load of wood. When he came back he brought with him a half dozen fully grown young birds that he had killed with a stick, so plentiful were they and so easy of approach.

It was the habit of the male bird to incubate while the female was away feeding. After returning she sat on the egg while he took his turn at foraging for a meal. Each went out to feed at certain definite times during the day. My father told me that when a flock left the "roost," as the settlers called it, going out to feed, it was like distant thunder. Our home was over two miles from the nearest nests. It was generally believed by father and his neighbors that a large part of the pigeons' food was gleaned from the recently sown wheat fields of Iowa and Illinois, the birds not only picking up all the uncovered

grain but also pulling up that which had sprouted. They also frequented the oak groves when feeding on the acorns.

Every year during my boyhood scattering pairs were common everywhere about the groves and big woods. It was the habit of these birds, when not sitting on the nests, to congregate in small flocks. In spring or during the summer these flocks flying about were of common occurrence. The big flock in its migration would pass our way at some time nearly every year. It might be going in any direction.

In those days wheat and oats were sown broadcast by hand. The sower would stride back and forth across the field, a sack of wheat slung over his shoulder, and his hand swinging steadily, scattering the grain. The sown grain was covered with a harrow or drag, which consisted of a frame of oak pieces in which were set steel teeth like large square spikes. When drawn over the ground the drag tore up the earth, mellowed it and covered the grain. Sometimes a brush drag was made by boring holes through an oak pole and inserting small brushy trees into the holes.

When flocks of pigeons were about some one had to watch the field and "shoo" them off. Usually a boy was chosen, and more than once that was my job while father was at dinner. If not frightened away, a flock would light on the field and start walking across it, picking up the grain as it went. As those that were finding grain were slowed by the process of picking it up, they soon found themselves at the rear end of the traveling flock and the grain all gone, which they remedied by flying over the other feeding birds and alighting in front, soon to be flown over in turn by the birds in the rear. So they went across the field almost as fast as a man could walk—like boys playing leapfrog—but they cleaned up the newly sown grain. Not a kernel was left. Pieces of bright tin on sticks and poles and scare-crows of various kinds were also used to frighten them off.

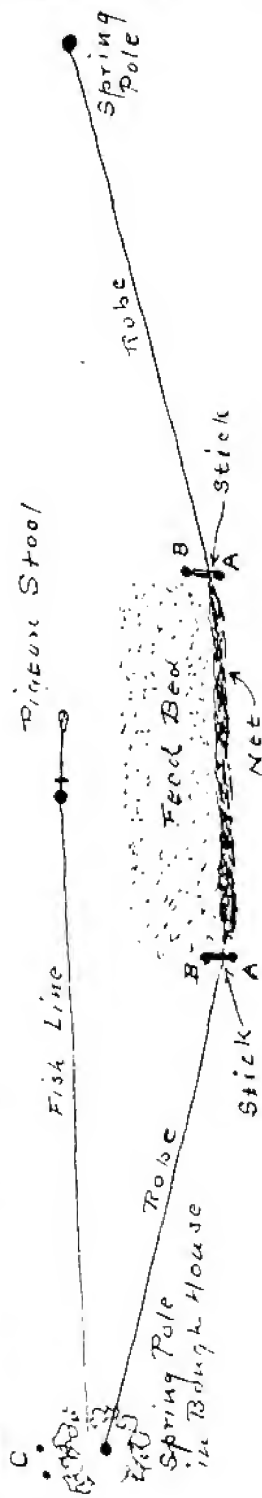
West of our farm (near Postville, Allamakee County) the wild lands were mostly covered with a young growth of "jack oak" and poplar among which were standing the very scattered storm- and fire-scarred old seed trees of large size. I have seen these old trees so loaded down with resting or roosting pigeons that a limb would sometimes give way under their weight, and the tree would erupt the alarmed birds in a sort of exploding pigeon bomb. My father would tell of how he once in the dark of evening sneaked up through the brush below a tree and, shooting along an upward slanting limb, killed nine birds at one shot with his squirrel rifle. There was one particular group of old trees in which they habitually roosted.

We used to try to get them with father's method in the groves when they were filled with them, but the birds kept out of reach of our smooth-bore rifles loaded with shot, and we seldom got one. Once a couple of railroad men came out from town with double-barrel shot-guns, and I saw one of them bring down his bird as it was flying across the road through the grove. It seemed a wonderful shot to me then.

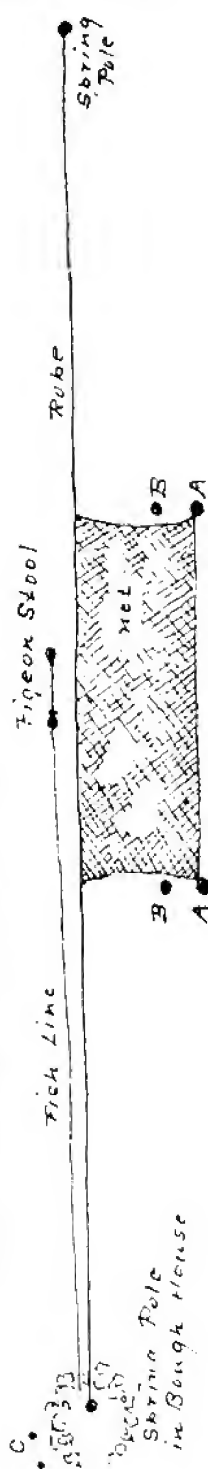
One time when the grove on 'the eighty' north of the new home was filled with the noisy mob of pigeons, I saw them coming down out of the trees in a feathered stream to drink out of a little pool of clear water with mud shore. They were all around it as thick as they could stand, and they drank without lifting their heads as a hen does.

Perhaps nothing contributed more to exterminate the vast multitudes of the Passenger Pigeon than the systematic netting of them by professional pigeon catchers who followed them the year around wherever they went. The catch was sold without dressing the birds, and the buyer traveled with the flights of pigeons. Farmers who lived near by were hired to haul them to the nearest railroad station, where this buyer packed them in barrels or boxes, put a chunk of ice on top of them, and shipped them by express to Milwaukee or Chicago. I

PIGEON TRAP — SET.



PIGEON TRAP — AFTER SPRINGING.



THE PASSENGER PIGEON TRAP

A pull on the rope by the pigeon catcher hidden in the "lunge house" pulled the sticks out of the notches in the hub stakes, and the spring of the joles threw the net over the feed-bed. "A" and "B" indicate hub stakes; "C" indicates stakes to which "fliers" were fastened. Pen sketch by Ellison Orr.

have seen half a wagon-load of dead birds lying beside the bough house of a catcher—one day's work. The price paid for the catch was figured by the dozen birds.

The buyers kept well advised of the movements of the pigeons by telegraph, and knew where they were nesting or where food was plentiful; wherever the pigeons went, the catchers followed them relentlessly to the end, spring, summer, fall and winter.

The equipment of one of these pigeon catchers consisted of a net 12 by 20 feet with one-inch mesh; a half-inch rope about 100 feet long; a "pigeon-stool"; four "hub stakes"; two "sticks"; three or four "stool pigeons" in a small cage; a hatchet; and an extra shirt or two and socks. Coming by rail to a town near where the pigeons were either nesting or feeding in numbers, the catchers would take their outfit in a grain sack (with the exception of the little cage) and scatter out into the country, sometimes going for miles before they found what to them looked like good places for setting the nets. A field surrounded by scattering groves was usually considered a good place.

A feed-bed the size of the net was first made, and some grain obtained from a nearby farmer was scattered over it. The net was then spread over this bed, and two of the corners were fastened to two of the hub stakes driven into the ground. Then two spring poles were set in line with the opposite side of the net and 50 feet or more from the part of the net opposite the corners fastened to the hub stakes. The rope was then fastened to the spring poles, around one of which a "bough house" of leafy brush and grass had been built. The other two hub stakes were then set at the length of the sticks from the first stakes and toward the center of the net. The net was then "set" by pulling it over to the first hub stakes, into a sort of loose roll, and fastening it there with the notched sticks. One end of the sticks was butted against the hub stakes toward the center, and the other end which held the rope was kept down by a notch in the corner hub stakes. The whole was so arranged that a pull on the rope by the catcher in the bough house would release the net, which, when thrown up by the sticks as they turned over and pulled by the spring of the poles to which the rope was attached, would flop quickly over the bed, pinning down the luckless pigeons that were feeding there.

The pigeon-stool was a light stick with a shorter piece attached at right angles, the whole being fastened by a hinge on a stake driven into the ground. At the end opposite the hinge was a small round hoop covered with netting. To this hoop the stool pigeon was fastened. A string was attached as shown in the diagram, and ran from the contrivance to the bough house. The device was operated by pulling the string slowly, thus lifting the end on which the stool pigeon was fastened, and then letting it drop suddenly. When the bird felt himself falling, he would flutter his wings in trying to fly. To his mates passing over this looked like a bird feeding on the ground. If they were hungry they were quite sure to circle and come down. Sometimes they would drop down without circling—but to their fate.

The catcher also made use of a couple of "fliers" as decoys. They were birds whose eyelids had been fastened together with a thread or had been blindfolded. Each was fastened to the bough house by about 50 feet of fish-line. As they could not see they would sit perfectly quiet wherever they were placed. When the catcher saw a flock approaching he would toss these birds into the air, and when the end of their string was reached it would pull them down to the ground as if alighting.

When we remember that they had to be frightened away from the newly sown grain fields, it is not hard to understand how easily the hungry birds were decoyed. From large flocks sometimes enough would alight to cover the feed-bed, and when the net was thrown they would

lift it a foot or more in their efforts to escape, many getting out from under it around the edges. They were speedily killed by crushing in the back of the head with the thumb.

I recall very clearly the appearance of the Passenger Pigeon's nest. It was a flat platform of small sticks and weeds. The one white egg laid could easily be seen through the nest by an observer on the ground. The usual height from the ground for the scattered nesters was from 10 to 30 feet, but in the big "roosts" the nests were anywhere from 6 to 60 feet up, and were in any location or in any kind of tree where so shiftless a structure could be made to stick. Still, I saw remnants of nests in the trees of the big roost on Yellow River for perhaps a half dozen years afterward. Scattered pairs of pigeons were fairly common nesting birds during the 1870's.

I cannot now remember clearly of my finding more than three late nests. The first two, found perhaps the same year, were about 15 feet up in second-growth "jack oaks" in the scrubby grove west of where our new house was afterward built. Both nests were on horizontal dead limbs. One tree stood about 15 rods northwest and the other about 20 rods southwest near the line-fence between our farm and that of Jimmy Whalen. The last nest found held a sitting bird and was about 10 feet from the ground in a small bur oak in the then wild and unfrequented valley of Williams Run, on the NE. NW. of Sec. 18, T. 96, R. 6 West, Franklin Township, Allamakee County. This was after the pigeons had become extremely rare and the finding was a surprise to me. My recollection is that I had not even seen one of these birds for several years before. I cannot now give the year, but believe it was in the late 1880's or early 90's. It may have been the last nest built by a wild Passenger Pigeon. And I robbed it by taking the egg for my collection!

Mr. Whitbecker, who was deputy Auditor at the same time that I was Clerk of Court and who was raised in Lansing, told me that when the "big flight" of pigeons moved up the Mississippi River valley and encountered strong head-winds, they flew very close to the ground and dipped into the lateral valleys, then rose to clear the bluffs. The boys, and men too, would station themselves in the small brush just at the top of the hill, and with long cane fish-poles would thrash into the flocks as they passed close over their heads. He said that when the flight was on everyone had "pigeon pie."

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT JONES

Dear Fellow Members:

I wish to thank you for the trust you have shown in electing me your President. I will endeavor to prove myself worthy of your faith in me. With your support and coöperation, the Iowa Ornithologists' Union will extend its influence and increase its membership as it has done so consistently for the past several years.

I feel that we should make especially good progress in the next few years if we follow up on the spirit of conservation which is now so prevalent. What other Iowa organization is better suited to advising in the conservation program, as we are truly conservationists untainted by commercialism. It is indeed fortunate that our membership is made up of enthusiastic citizens of all walks of life. It helps us to keep our feet on the ground.

Many of us pursue our "birding" activities strictly from the standpoint of a hobby. The organization would undoubtedly be justified if this were its only aim. Our educational influence is, however, rapidly growing. The tone of the recent Fairfield meeting indicated that many

of our members are directly or indirectly connected with bird study in our public schools. It is a good work, carried on at a vital point. I know that this gets results from my experiences in the feeding campaign here in northwest Iowa last winter. Our public school, with a high school enrollment of less than 90, contributed \$9 to the cause; while the local Boy Scout troop braved that winter weather, which we shall brag about for decades to come, in order to distribute the grain. You may be interested to know that they report having covered about 245 miles by car and, collectively, 117 miles on foot (much of the latter mileage on skis). It is particularly gratifying to us to know that such song birds as Horned Larks, Snow Buntings and Tree Sparrows, as well as many of the woodpeckers, were observed at these feeding stations. Such work as this, which makes the participants take a personal interest in "our birds," has been stimulated by many members of our Union. They, in turn, owe their incentive to our annual meetings and especially to our official organ, 'Iowa Bird Life.' I am sure we all feel that our organization has been very efficiently managed and that our magazine is one which we can proudly recommend to our friends.

May you have many pleasant and fruitful bird hikes before we meet at Cedar Falls next May.

Sincerely,

MYRLE L. JONES

GENERAL NOTES

Canvas-backs in Buchanan County.—I saw a flock of 5 and a flock of 12 Canvas-backs at the Independence mill-pond in open water. They were observed near a flock of 100 ducks of unknown identity early on the morning of April 1, 1936.—JOHN W. LYNCH, Independence, Iowa.

The Food of a Phoebe.—On the 15th day of March, 1936, a Phoebe was found dead by W. M. Rosene and Robert Walker near the mouth of Bluff Creek, Boone County, Iowa. This specimen was examined by the writer and the following records were made: Weight, 12.75 grams; wing, 8.6 cm.; wing-spread, 28 cm.; length, 17.9 cm.; bill, 1.3 cm.; tail, 5 cm.; weight of gizzard, 8.5 grams; contents of crop, 4 Pentatomidae, 4 species of beetles (Carabidae), 1 scorpion or centipede (Arachnida). The identification of the insects in the crop was verified by Dr. H. H. Knight of the Zoology Department of Iowa State College. The exact cause of the bird's death was undetermined. Both crop and gizzard were filled with insects, although one would think that this early bird would have difficulty in finding them.—WALTER ROSENE, JR., Ogden, Iowa.

The Mockingbird at Atlantic.—During the summer of 1935, members of the Atlantic Bird Club motored to the Dallinger farm six miles northeast of our city to see the Mockingbird. I had known the western bird very well at my old home in California and was very glad to find a representative of the family here. It was like meeting an old friend. The bird was not at all timid and sang beautifully. It came to the tree over our heads and gave imitations of songs of the Meadowlark, Dickcissel, Song Sparrow, Bluebird, Cardinal, and even the wee chicken of the barn-yard. The pair of Mockingbirds nested on the Dallinger farm, and after their first nest was blown down, they went to work on the second nest, quite undaunted. Mrs. Dallinger told me that they succeeded in taking at least two of their family south with them.—MRS. ARTHUR LEE, Atlantic, Iowa.

Some Spring Arrival Dates for 1936.—The first Cowbird was seen on March 6, which is an exceptionally early date for this species. On March 22, we listed the Phoebe, Fox Sparrow and Cowbird. On March 15, a few pairs of both Baldpates and Shovelers were found scattered about in the flocks of thousands of Pintails and Mallards. A Burrowing Owl seen on March 29, gives the writer a new early arrival date for this species, by nearly two weeks.—WM. YOUNGWORTH, Sioux City, Iowa.

Lewis's Woodpecker at Clear Lake.—This bird, which I described in the March issue of 'Iowa Bird Life' (p. 12), remained at the feeding-station until March 10, after which it disappeared. Its occurrence at this place was from November 10, 1935, to March 10, 1936.—F. H. DAVIS, Clear Lake, Iowa.

NECROLOGY

Miss Kitty Tiedemann, of Burlington, a member of Iowa Ornithologists' Union since 1930, died January 19, 1936, aged 69 years. Born in Des Moines County, Iowa, she lived there almost her entire life. Her life was devoted to teaching, in the rural schools of the county prior to 1904, and in the Burlington public schools since that time. She supervised nature study in the schools for many years, and was particularly interested in the study of birds. Her education was received at the old normal school at Burlington, with further studies at Chicago Union Park Academy, Chautauqua Institute in New York, and Iowa State College at Ames. She attended many of the sessions of the Wild Life School at McGregor, and was always active and enthusiastic in this work. The Burlington press speaks of her, in part: "During the time Miss Tiedemann was engaged in her nature study work, she probably became better known among the pupils of the public schools of the city than any other instructor. Her work was not merely a gesture of earning a livelihood. She loved it thoroughly and imparted her knowledge so understandingly as to create a similar enthusiasm in her pupils. She had an unlimited capacity of affection for her charges, was gifted with an abundant sense of humor and an appreciation of the superior aspects of life . . ."

RECENT BIRD BOOKS

BIRDS AND BIRD CLUBS, by George S. Foster, M. D. (Christopher Publishing House, Boston, 1936; cloth, pp. 1-237, illustrated; price, \$2.50).

Groups of bird students who contemplate organization into some form of local club will find this an excellent source-book of information on how to go about organizing, how to hold meetings, how to arrange a schedule of entertainment and study for the entire year, how to appeal to the public interest, and a dozen other related topics. Local bird clubs are becoming more numerous every year, which indicates the growth of popular interest in birds. We now have a half dozen or more local clubs in Iowa where formerly we had none; in a number of eastern states the increase has been much more pronounced. Birds have a universal appeal, and the local club is the way to derive the maximum of pleasure by sharing with others the work and experiences encountered. Some groups will prefer to use their own ideas in organizing their local club; others will find it desirable to follow the detailed plans and suggestions outlined in this book.

Dr. Foster is a busy physician who has made bird study a pleasant avocation. He has spent much time in organizing local bird clubs in his state. His book is an earnest endeavor to increase public interest in birds through local organization, and the text is planned with that

objective. The work of his home bird club at Manchester, New Hampshire, is described in detail. From it may be drawn practical suggestions for use in other localities. Among the 45 chapters of the book these are of particular interest: 'Organizing a Bird Club'; 'What the Bird Club Could Do for the Song Birds in and about the Community'; 'Song Bird Week'; 'A Bird Sanctuary on a College Campus'; 'Small, Private Bird Sanctuaries'; 'Planting of Trees and Shrubbery Favorable to Bird Life'. Although much of the matter is not new, there is value in having it arranged in convenient form, where it may be consulted without the necessity of searching through many volumes. The lack of an index for the book is to be regretted. Quite a number of chapters are devoted to the author's personal field trips and experiences with birds. Here again the material is not new or the experiences novel, but the narration is good and the anecdotes make interesting reading. The book is a creditable step in spreading the gospel of bird study and protection.—F. J. P.

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The U. S. Biological Survey recently issued its 'Bird Migration Memorandum No. 1', a 39-page bulletin based on 12,000 records made by 157 observers during the spring migration of 1935. The Survey plans to issue similar reports each year. The bulletin contains much valuable data and will be very useful to all students of bird migration. The records are tabulated by species and are given under the divisions which make up the routes of migration through North America. Iowa is included in what is called the "Mississippi Flyway." A map shows the location of stations of cooperating observers. Although 10 stations are indicated for Iowa, only four persons contributed records for the 1935 report. These were: Mrs. Robert I. Bordner, Hudson; Mrs. Mary E. Hatch, McGregor; Mrs. W. J. Armour, Sioux City; Fred J. Pierce, Winthrop. Presumably, copies of this bulletin are still available from the Survey (Washington, D. C.).

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The T. S. Roberts Ornithology Club, of St. Cloud, Minn., begins publication of 'The Journal of Minnesota Ornithology', with the April, 1936, issue as Vol. I, No. 1. Intended as an annual, the first issue has 68 pages which are filled with bird notes of high quality. The presentation is attractive, with careful editing, good printing and valuable contents going to make up a very worth-while piece of work. Copies of the first issue are for sale at fifty cents each.

* * * * *

The Editor of 'Iowa Bird Life' is making up a reference file of the mimeographed letters of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union (1923-1928) and would like to obtain the following missing numbers: No. 17 (Oct., 1926), No. 20 (June 14, 1927), No. 23 (Apr. 7, 1928), and No. 24 (Sept. 19, 1928). He would like to hear from anyone who has these letters for disposal. Casual inquiry leads to the belief that not more than a half dozen full sets of these letters are in existence, which reduces their value for bibliographical citation to almost zero. Distribution and accessibility would seem the criterion for including mimeographed bird journals in bibliographies. The Union's letters contained many useful bird notes, which will not be available unless published. It would be very desirable, if we could afford it, to print these bird notes in 'Iowa Bird Life'. However, this project seems impossible at the present time, since our funds are only adequate for printing current material.

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History was repeated at this year's meeting. In 1933 every one of the Union's presidents was at Fairfield. This has seldom happened during recent years and was considered an accomplishment. This year

it happened again. The five former presidents were in attendance, as well as the new president, M. L. Jones. Arthur Palas and Walter Rosene, Sr. are the only members who have attended every meeting of the Union. They were both at Fairfield this year, so their fine record remains unbroken.

* * * * *

Irwin T. Bode is another of our members to join the U. S. Biological Survey. He is connected with the Division of Wildlife Research and is located at Washington, D. C. He was formerly Iowa State Fish and Game Warden.

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We are very glad of the opportunity to publish Mr. Orr's historical sketch of the Passenger Pigeon. It establishes breeding records for Allamakee and Winneshiek Counties and is an important contribution to the Iowa literature of this bird. The article is taken from an unpublished manuscript entitled 'Reminiscences of a Pioneer Boy,' which Mr. Orr has written for the benefit of his children and grandchildren.

Mr. Orr is of Scotch-Irish ancestry, was born at McGregor, Iowa, June 15, 1857, and has always lived in this state. In 1858 his parents moved to a farm near Postville, and this was his home until 1904 when he moved to Waukon, his present home. He followed the occupation of farming until his 30th year, when because of physical disability he was forced to leave it. After that he was, in succession, a teacher, assistant bank cashier, Clerk of the District Court, and in the service of the Bell Telephone Company. He is now retired. His opportunities to serve the public came to him in abundance. Among them was a six-year term as Trustee of the State College of Agriculture. In later years he gave much time to the study of Indian archaeology in the Mississippi Valley, and during the summers of 1934 and 1935, under Project 1047 of the Iowa Planning Board, he engaged in state-wide surveys and explorations of prehistoric Indian mounds and village sites.



Ellison Orr

Of his ornithological interests he says: "While yet a boy, and with very limited opportunities for acquiring information, I became greatly interested in the bird life then so abundant about my home. Before I had reached my majority I had made a collection of the eggs of birds nesting locally, including the Long-eared Owl, Red-tailed Hawk, Upland Plover, Prairie Chicken, Short-billed Marsh Wren and Passenger Pigeon, once common nesting birds in the county. Of these the Red-tailed Hawk alone still occupies less than half a dozen old nesting trees; the others are gone from our midst." Mr. Orr recently became a member of Iowa Ornithologists' Union.

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